

Historic District Commission

August 20,2020

Final Minutes

Call Meeting To Order: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, called meeting to order at 7:00 pm via ZOOM

Members Present: Patrick Gordon, Chairman, Julie Gilman, Select Board Rep, Grayson Shepard, Douglas McCallum, Pam Gjetum

Others Present: Kristen and Chris Osterwood, Geof Gaunt, Neil Martin, Kyle Zick, KZLA, Heather Taylor, PEA, Hubert Krah, Architect, Cory Belerin, PE, Mark Leighton

New Business: Public Hearings: The application of Kristen and Chris Osterwood for changes to the existing structure at 160 High Street. The proposed improvements include replacement of windows, portions of siding, and doors and the restoration of an existing porch. Case # 20-4. Kristen Osterwood spoke and read their application. She stated that their home has had many alterations since it was built in 1910. All of this was done before it was designated and made into the Historic District. Their goal is to restore some of the historical character of the house while restoring efficiency and quiet of the house. The window replacement has two parts. One is restoring the historic character and then sound and energy improvement. The current windows are vinyl with the grills only located between the glass. The windows on the western side of the home do have historical trim on three of them. The rest have minimal trim which reminds her of a warehouse. She has pictures in the packet the members have. For the proposed new windows, they would do Marvin windows with grills located exterior and interior. This will be in a two over two pattern. Any historical trim they will maintain or replace if they need to. For the sound and energy improvement, they will be triple paned. For the siding that needs replacing, they are replacing it in kind with the rest of the house. They want to replace the doors because it does not keep water or wind out. They have looked at fiberglass and wood, but they will look the same because they are planning to have them stay the exact way they are. The last part of the improvement is the porch improvement and she brought Hubert Krah, Architect because he designed the porch addition. Right now, the porch is only partway across the house and they would like to make it a full eight feet deep farmer's porch. They would like to take away some of the excessive roof lines with all of the additions it has had and restore some of the simple historic lines that it had. There will be railings on part of the porch where the drop off is more than eighteen inches. The middle part will be the farmer's porch. Patrick thanked her for such a complete application and he thinks they have a lot of good information. He opened it up to the members to speak about any information they feel is missing from this that they may need before they accept the application and then discuss and approve it. Doug said he has no questions and it is a very thorough and fair application. Pam is very pleased with the application. She said they have tried to make it as original as they can.

She walked up and looked at it the other day and said they have done a great job. Grayson said for the door, there is an indication of color. He wanted to know if they have looked at any manufacturers or types of door that it will be replaced with. He also wanted to know if it would have the same window pattern on the front. Kristen said that the picture she provided in the application is a quote from Selectwood in Portsmouth. She cannot remember the manufacturer. Patrick asked if it was a fiberglass exterior insulated door. Kristen said the one they have a quote for is, but if they can afford it, they will go for wood. Julie said she did not have any questions and thanked her for the full application. She said the color of the door is something the commission has no regulation about. Patrick again thanked her for the application. He thinks it is easy enough for the doors to make a condition to say either fiberglass exterior door or a wood exterior door. Patrick then called for a motion to accept the application as complete. Pam made the motion to accept the application. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application accepted. Patrick then asked the members if any further discussion is needed before he calls for a motion to approve or deny the application. Doug thinks it is very good and has nothing negative to say about it. Pam agreed and said they could use this application as an example of how to do an application. She said it is an excellent job and she sees nothing wrong with it. Grayson feels the same. Julie had a question about the page that talks about the porch replacement. Simplifying the roof line, does that mean by taking out the piece that is over where the little porch that you have is. Kristen said yes, getting rid of that small triangle that is over one of the front doors. Patrick then called for a motion for acceptance of historical appropriateness of the application and the requested changes. Doug brought the motion forward. Pam seconded. Patrick needed to add and Doug amended the motion so the exterior doors were either fiberglass veneer or solid wood. Doug moved that they be either at the owner's decision. Pam seconded this amended motion. All were in favor and application approved.

Next on the agenda is the application of Phillips Exeter Academy for the relocation of an existing structure known as the "Dow Barn" and replacement of windows in the said structure. Case #20-5. Heather Taylor the Campus Planner/Architect spoke. She said there are a lot of others from the team present and she will introduce them. A number of them will be presenting and they do have graphics. She then introduced the team. Mark Leighton, Director of Facilities, Architects Geoff Gaunt and Neil Martin. Landscaper Kyle Zick, KLLA and Cory Beldin, Civil Engineer. She then said that they are here tonight with an application for a change to an existing structure, the Dow Barn. The Dow Barn is currently located behind Dow House, 75 Front Street. They are proposing to build a new foundation and move Dow Barn approximately 4 feet to the east and 7 feet to the north in association with the construction of a new dormitory on the site of the current Fisher Theatre that is just outside of the Historic District. As part of this, they will also be installing new windows to match and the architects will go over this in more detail. The dormitory is outside of the historic line with the exception of two supports for the entry portico. She said they wanted to bring and present what they are doing because they realize they are in the neighborhood and they wanted to bring this to the commission because the dormitory itself is outside of the Historic District. She said they want the commission to know what they are doing. What they are looking to do is build a new 60 bed dorm with five

faculty apartments. In 2018, they completed the Goel Center for Theatre and Dance and Fisher Theatre has sat empty since that time. They are replacing what is a 1972 Medal Butler Building with this new project. She then asked Geoff to put up the slides for everyone to see. Heather then said that one of the things they want to make sure and everybody understands with this new dormitory, the academy is not looking to change its enrollment nor are they looking to change the proportion of day students to boarding students. In 2018, they also had over enrollment which made it clear that their existing bed count is not quite adequate for the number of students that they have. The slide up is the project site. The Fisher Theatre since 2018 has been unoccupied and has been a storage facility. One of the things they are really excited about this project is that they get to incorporate Dow Barn and give it new life. Right now it is a storage facility and they are going to turn it into two faculty apartments without changing the nature of what you see from Front Street. The next slide shows the proposed view from Front Street. They are also looking to restore the fence that is along Front Street because parts of it have come down. In terms of timeline, they want to make sure the commission understands they are not looking to do this tomorrow. They are in the middle of design development and they have been approved to complete that phase of the design. They are in the process of getting all of the permits and approvals in line. She said they wanted to share with the commission the specifics about Dow Barn and also share images of the whole dormitory project. Geoff Gaunt spoke and said he would like to walk through the overview of the dormitory. He then put up some slides showing where the Dow Barn was and where the new dormitory would be. He said it is a very secure and efficient footprint they are trying to fit in and you can see that the Dow Barn is now connected to the new dormitory. In order to do this, they actually have to pick it up and move it. What is nice about this site is that when you move from south to north, the site dips down a full story so that they are able to keep a fair amount of the project underground. Geoff then turned it over to his colleague Neil Martin who will take the commission through the renderings of the dormitory which will give the commission a better feel of the way the building fits within the context. Neil spoke and said how they approach this building is that they have a very sensitive Historic District and two jewels, the front building and the Dow House as well. Their approach is that the sense of craftsmanship and scale is achieved in the new building. They have the front piece which is a two story building with a very sensitive connector to the Dow Barn. They have closely made it a darker connector and allow the Dow Barn to remain as an independent piece. The massing of the project overall, consists of three buildings. They are the front building, middle building and a back building. Members saw all of this on the slides being presented. With the new building they sought to create with Dow Barn and Dow House as well to come as close to those materials so that the unity of the three buildings comes together as a symphony by the same point in time, they are a new building as well. At this point, Patrick opened it up to the commission members with any questions about the dormitory.. Doug stated it was pretty clear so far about the dormitory. Pam wanted to thank them for saving the Dow Barn. She said when she first saw the application, she thought they would be losing another barn. She said they have incorporated it beautifully. She asked if there was any reason for the type of column they will have. Neil said they are trying to keep it as neutral as they can. The two entries of two buildings adjacent to where this dormitory will be are very ornate and they want to be sure that when you walk on Front Street,

they are not distracting from folks looking at those entries of both Front Street dorm and Dow Barn and also Dow House. It is a matter of keeping it as a backdrop to those two buildings. He said they could explore other options. Julie asked if the pitch of the front elevation of the new building is similar to what is on the Dow House. Neil said he thinks it is similar. Julie's next question was on the same entrance area that Pam spoke of and if that should be more of a porch roof as opposed to being flat. Geoff said they could look into that. Greyson had no questions. Patrick had a question about the roof pitch on the dormitory in the front house portion of the three sections. It is currently lower than the peak of the barn now or would it be competing in height in terms of profile from the street. Neil said that it is lower and he said the height of the Front Street grade is 40 feet. Patrick's other comment was about the columns out front. He said they do seem to be out of place. They look more like a modern version. Geoff stated the Dow How and the Front Street dorms are beautiful examples of historical buildings and they are not trying to replicate. They want to try and create something that will be a friendly neighbor and will fit in well. Geoff thanked the commission members for all of their comments. He said they were insightful and helpful. They are very happy to be able to incorporate the Dow Barn into the project because it is a gem. They are excited to be able to restore it and give it a new use. There will be two faculty using it vs just it being used for storage. The south elevation of it is really what they want to maintain the look of the building. As you move around the other bases because of some other uses, there are some variations in terms of window locations because there will be bathrooms in the building. They are trying to hold onto the south facade and restore. The intent of this is to leave as much as possible on the south facade and that involves a few things. They understand because of where the ramp was located into the large double doors, the grade came up pretty close to the building and there is some deterioration at the base of the building in this location. They want to replace all of the boards that are damaged, as well as some of the trim pieces. In terms of the large barn door and window, they want to replace those with custom built insulated solid double pane windows to maintain all of the same look. The goal is really to bring it back to what it was originally but understanding there is a new function and the doors will no longer be moveable. They would serve as a wall panel from inside. They Geoff said that the diamond windows would get replaced with new wood windows from Marvin. They would like to use material that is a little hardier and resistant to moisture. They are open to the conversation of using wood in this case, but it would just be the lower couple of rows of clapboard where they would be utilizing a different material. He then said as Neil has mentioned, they are looking at using rubberized simulated slate for the roof. He said this is about it, but they do want to speak about some of the landscaping that they are planning because this falls within the district. Patrick then opened it back up to the members and started with Doug about the barn portion of the application. Doug said they are not doing a design review of the dorm, right. Patrick said that right now, they are speaking about the barn. Doug said he thinks the barn is a wonderful building. He is disappointed that the new building does not refer to it. He is worried about the new windows and how much damage will be done to the existing building. He also said it would be nice to have real slate. Pam thanked them for preserving the barn and said they have done a great amount of work. She is not sold on the darkness of the connector. She said it stands out a little more than it should. Julie said she is not so concerned about the connector because she thinks it being darker is a good thing

because of the new being connected to the old. She said it is a two story connection and a lot of roof there. Is there that much roof because of the two different angles that it is connecting to from the Front Street view. Patrick said that in the image they can see, there is a floor plan of it and there is a full staircase in it. He thinks that is what is dictating the size of the connector right now. Geoff said that is correct. Julie said one of the unique things about the barn are the diamond shaped windows and they are talking about making custom made replacements and it makes her wonder about the circular window on the dormitory and why that doesn't steal a little bit from the barn just to read as a connector. She said the circle seems out of place. Neil said she could be right. There is a real window on the front of the dorm and it could certainly be a diamond as well. Greyson did not have much and said that Julie touched on what he had. He appreciates their effort to try and maintain the south facade by maintaining everything. Patrick said to Neil and Geoff that he used to work as a sales rep for a Marvin Window Company and he suggested they ask them about the venting picture window, which is an operative window that looks like a picture window but can tilt in slightly about two or three inches to allow venting. Patrick said on the doors they are replacing, the sliding doors that are there now to become fixed panel doors. He would like to request they put dummy hardware on the outside so they still appear as if they were operating doors. Patrick said this would be a request for those. Doug said there are going to be a lot of people trying to open those doors. He asked about the windows that are going to be replaced if they are going to be a full frame replacement or are they intended to be an insert replacement and the existing frame will stay. Neil said it would be as an insert. It was then turned over to Kyle Zick, KZLA to talk about the landscaping aspect of the project. Kyle had slides to present to the members. He said they wanted to have a foreground and a context for these buildings that is appropriate. He said other things they have considered are how to locate circulation and parking. They have done this on the west side of the siting and they have twelve proposed parking spaces there. They are for the faculty that will be living in these dorms. One parking space will be for PEA maintenance vehicles. He said they have highlighted some of the entries. The main entrance to the building is on the south facade. They have planned for bicycle storage near the building's front door. In the front entry green space, it is a flexible space. A lot of the time it will not be occupied. They want to frame it with planting that would be at the edges of the space and maintain existing trees. They also have lighting. All of this was shown on slides. Patrick then opened it up to the members for questions or comments. Doug said he thinks the planning is very well done and makes a lot of sense to him. Pam has nothing to add and thinks they have done a splendid job. Julie said the only thing she has is the height of the trees. She then asked if they were putting in a geothermal field in the front. Kyle said they would be putting in a geothermal field under the new campus green. He said the trees are all shade trees and the ones next to the connector are smaller because they do not want a large tree that is close to the building. Grayson asked about the sea walls along the walkways. Kyle said they are only at the entrance. Patrick asked if they were planning to have a panic button outside of the dormitory. Heather said the blue lights that are throughout the campus, there will be one on the front side. Patrick asked about the request to move the barn building, is that just to fit within the constraints of where the new dormitory is going to be located or is it because of the foundation of the existing barn. Heather said they are moving it because as you go down behind the barn, the grade drops off and they

are building that up to create the parking and there is a retaining wall on the back end. They had a conversation with the Fire Department how to fight a fire and protect this building and they needed in order to get the fire truck around, they needed a little more space. This is the reason for moving it. Patrick said this concludes all of the member's comments. He asked if there was anyone from the public who had any questions or comments and there were none. Patrick then closed the public hearing. He then asked the commission members for a motion to accept the application. Pam made the motion to accept the application. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application accepted. Patrick then opened it back up to the members for any additional comments or questions needed before approving. Doug said he thinks this is a very interesting project of the new dorm. There are some cliques in the form of it that really are not derived from current commercial architecture. Pam said she thinks it is excellent, but she does not like the pillars and wishes they would change them. She would also like the center window to be a diamond. Patrick then asked the applicants about the last two comments if they are accepting of amending an application or if the commission was to make a condition and asked for the two things Pam talked about, would that be in conflict with their application or would they be in favor of that. Heather said they can certainly look at the columns again. They were trying to stick to the spirit of what they understand the commission's regulations of when you build new and not wanting it to look old. On the window, she said they have to explore what they can do. She does like the idea of the diamond. She said she thinks they can take them as comments because she does not think they want to go and change everything. Mark said if Patrick would clarify what are proposed for conditions, he thinks they would entertain reviewing it and reconsidering. Patrick said it really speaks to the style of the architecture. Those columns seem to be in conflict with the rest of the design. They look more mission than any other parts of the building do. For the window itself, they understand the meeting code in terms of ventilation. This would not be a condition of historical appropriateness, it would be more of a request for that window shape. Mark asked if the commission was asking them to make the change or asking them to reconsider making the change. Julie said to Patrick that she is not certain what he is asking for either. The application has been accepted as complete and have made comments on the design features. Julie asked if he was trying to finish the application tonight. Patrick said he would like to for the benefit of the applicants. Maybe making it more of a specific condition and it would be a recommendation to re-evaluate in the final design. Doug said he is confused because his understanding is they were just reviewing the barn and not the new dormitory. Patrick said it gets into a very sticky interpretation of the boundaries of the zoning and historic districts. The way they are written right now, they can be interpreted to mean that 200 feet off of Front Street is where the Historic District purview terminates. Therefore, really the only thing that is within are those columns. There is still debate about clarification as to where the boundary is because history doesn't necessarily terminate 200 feet off of any boundary. Patrick said he is trying to bring this to a conclusion tonight so the applicant does not have to come back for any reason. Mark said they are very open to rethink the columns and the windows. Patrick would like to rephrase and call for a motion that has those as recommendations and not as conditions of approval. This brings most clarity to the commission's desires to revisit those in design. Julie said she is still fixated on the circular window. She wanted to know if there could be diamond shape trim. She asked for the

applicants to consider a change there. She would like to see the front entrance porch really be downsized. Grayson said he does not have anything to add because everyone has touched all the main topics that were addressed. Patrick then called for a motion with the recommendations of revisiting the circular window to hopefully match more of the shape, style of the diamond window that is on the barn now. To also revisit the entry for the columns and the shape of the roof. Julie said that they were talking about two over two windows on the first floor. Patrick said he thought this was pretty acceptable to the applicants. Patrick is now making four recommendations.

One is the diamond window over the circular window.

Revisiting the design of the entry columns.

The entry canopy.

Two over two windows.

Pam moved to approve the application with the four recommendations. Julie seconded. All were in favor and application approved.

Other Business: Approval of July 16th minutes and August 6th. The members did not have the August minutes so they were tabled until next month's meeting. The members made some corrections to the July 16th minutes. Pam made a motion to accept minutes as amended. Julie seconded. All were in favor and minutes approved.

Patrick said proposed projects that are just outside the 200 foot boundary of the Historic District, the commission should take a harder look at how the districts are defined and bring some more clarity to that. Two hundred feet beyond is still within public view of a streetscape and is part of the contexts of the district itself. He thinks maybe they should take a look at rephrasing that to include the entire property that falls within that 200 feet. Julie said they should research this with the Town Planner. Patrick said he would bring it up with him.

Patrick wanted to bring up the temporary removal of the IOKA marquee. He said there were sixteen connections to the building. It was not just the chain it was hanging from at the top. You never know until something is pulled off, what is behind it. Julie said since their decision is being appealed to the Zoning Board, do they want a representative from the HDC there to defend our position. Patrick said he is planning to be and Gwen has come forward as well. Patrick said their argument is on the condition that they passed as the motion. They accepted the application but asked with the condition that the marquee stay in place. That is what they are appealing. Patrick said their decision is considered an administrative decision and when it is appealed to the ZBA it is to novo. It is not an overturning and they do not have to find any fault.

Their application is going to be specific to that condition. If they overturn or make a new decision, does their whole application get denied. Patrick said they should ask Dave Sharple. Patrick said he would like to think that he has started some sort of rapport with the ZBA on the Miller application. He does not know what they look into because the last application appeal, all the ZBA looked at was Section 8.

With no further business, Julie made a motion to adjourn. Pam seconded. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Herrick
Recording Secretary